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ABSTRACT

This first in a set of three reports presents the findings of Australia's Community Information Sharing Service (CISS) study designed to (1) collect data on public libraries in New South Wales which currently offer or contribute to a community information service; (2) analyze that data to assess the extent to which library involvement in community information is influenced by the library's degree of cooperation with other agencies, its methods of collecting and updating information, the structure of its indexing and classification systems, the quality of its promotion of services, and the measures of evaluation of its services; (3) develop guidelines for cooperation between libraries and other agencies, collecting and updating information, organizing a satisfactory indexing system, publicizing and promoting the services, initiating, expanding, and evaluating the services; and (4) communicate and promote these guidelines to public librarians and other community information workers. Survey methods and limitations of the study are described, and appendices include copies of the CISS cover letter, the collated questionnaire, Chi-square analyses, and a bibliography. (FM)

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COMMUNITY INFORMATION SERVICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES PUBLIC LIBRARIES

An investigation

by

Eugenia Lovelace

CISS
(Community Information Sharing Service)
in association with
The Library Council of New South Wales

Sydney 1979

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PREFACE

The proposal for this study was formulated by a group of CISS (Community Information Sharing Service) members in 1977. Funding was sought and obtained from the Library Council of New South Wales and the study was undertaken between July 1978 and July 1979.

As well as acknowledging the initial debt owing to CISS members who formulated the proposal, and to the Library Council of New South Wales who funded the study, I also wish to thank the Steering Committee who were a constant source of information, ideas and support. In particular, the help of Carol Yuen, Information Services Consultant, Public Libraries Division, State Library of New South Wales, and Jo McIntyre, Assistant State Librarian, Information Services, State Library of New South Wales, was invaluable.

Without seeking to lessen the contribution of those whose help has already been acknowledged a major debt of gratitude is owed to the people who provided the information upon which the Study is based.

Finally, I would like to thank Frances Lovejoy, School of Sociology, University of New South Wales, for help with the statistical analyses of the data.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1. Need for the Study

Few people today would deny that as our society has become more complex, and subject to accelerating change, it is becoming increasingly difficult for any one individual to possess first-hand or experiential knowledge of that society. Hence the provision of information* about society has become a major need for everyday living: an information need so complex and varied that informal information networks may no longer prove capable of either conveying the requisite volume of information or of providing the requisite number of access points.

The provision of professional information has long received the attention of information planners as the existence of sophisticated information services, such as MEDLARS, indicates. The provision of information for the community has in contrast been neglected. That this is changing is evidenced by both the words and the actions of information planners. The New South Wales State Plan for the development of public libraries declares:

> Information is a national resource critical to the nation's well-being, and ready access to information is considered indispensable to individual advancement as well as to national growth. (21:18)

Similar sentiments are being expressed by non-library information planners. For example, a seminar on information systems held under the auspices of the National Consultative Council on Social Welfare, recognizing that information poverty is a "feature of poverty" (9:13) sees "information as [a] critical resource for individual well-being." (9:13)

Community information services, that is, services providing information necessary for the individual's well-being as a member of the community, are thus being developed in an attempt to improve the just distribution of this critical resource. The Library Council of New South Wales has encouraged the growth of public library-based community information services through the provision of special funding to that end. The New South Wales Department of Youth and Community Services has likewise encouraged the growth of non-library based community information services: other government departments have also given financial support to such services. The voluntary sector has supplied skill, time and dedication.

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* The definition of information that will be used throughout this Report is that information is data that has been recognized as relevant by an individual, for a purpose in a particular environment. (18: 8-10) Thus, "information" is not an entity but rather a process, and by definition, a private process.

Thus there appears to be a situation where there are a number of library and non-library based community information services at various stages of development: variously funded; variously staffed; using a variety of information systems; often unaware of each other's existence.

The need for a factual over-view of the situation is evidently a necessary prelude to any attempt to assess whether or not such activities are contributing towards a just distribution of that critical resource, "Information".

2. Framework of the Study

The Community Information Sharing Service (CISS) was formed as a result of an awareness among a number of community information workers in New South Wales that contacts among themselves tended to be restricted to their own organizationally structured networks, for example, librarians with librarians, community workers with community workers and so on. This resulted in poorly informed networks operating independently: sometimes duplicating unnecessarily each others positive efforts; sometimes heading off on fruitless side-tracks that could have been avoided had the information about the experiences of other groups been readily available.

CISS hoped that by providing a forum for the exchange of information among community information workers from all the agencies involved that it could help to stimulate, enrich and facilitate the flow of information about community information services regardless of the organizational or professional affiliation of the workers involved. Needless to say CISS members were imbued with a sense of the value of information for both personal and professional development.

Over a period of some three years CISS members in New South Wales met once a month and exchanged information in an informal setting. From information shared at these meetings there was gradually developed a pool of information and attitudes: from this pool a number of currents of thought slowly emerged and became predominant.

One was that library-based community information services were in an uneven state of development: some libraries offering no service at all; some libraries offering a passive, unsystematic service; some libraries offering an active, organized service. The varied nature of the community information activities engaged in by non-library based agencies appeared to reflect the diversity of purposes underlying those activities: a diversity such that a categorization of the kaleidescope appeared to be all that could be attained.

Another current of thought was that communication among workers in all information agencies was essential not only to ensure that community information workers were themselves well-informed about their own working environment, but also because the provision of community information came to be seen as being more effectively provided through a variety of agencies providing a variety of methods of service delivery. Further, as an awareness grew of the scope and volume of information necessary for everyday living in our complex and changing society, a corresponding awareness developed of the impossibility of any one service, library-based or otherwise, being able to collect and maintain all the relevant information. Thus,

there grew a commitment to the concept of co-operation: a concept essential granted the view that community information is sometimes more effectively disseminated by linking the enquirer with another, more appropriate information service than by attempting to answer all queries from the resources of the one service.

The need for co-operation with service agencies also became evident as an awareness grew of the importance placed by service agencies on the information component of service delivery. Provision of a service and provision of information about a service are inextricably linked and it became clear that one could not declare information services to be the domain of information service agencies. Rather, information services could sometimes be provided by agencies specializing in information and at other times be provided, as an adjunct, by agencies specializing in other services.

The very nature of community information, that impermanent "living body of information that is out there in the community" (11:377) makes its capture difficult. This was expressed repeatedly by both library and non-library information workers all of whom felt a need for adequate mechanisms for collecting, organizing and up-dating information.

These ideas were developed largely on the basis of information exchanged among practitioners. However, they also appear in both the overseas and Australian literature. Britain and the United States are countries that have exerted some noticeable influence on the development of community information services in Australia. The review by Walley and Davinson from Leeds Polytechnic Developments in Community Information Service in Public Libraries in the United States is particularly interesting in offering a British survey of a major United States project. (30) They observe in 1975, a propos community information services that:

> Nowhere is the concept clearly defined and the variety of models of operational practice which have developed ... suggest that the concept is open to a wide variety of interpretations. (30:9)

However, they find at least three elements common to the various models of service. All are concerned with information for daily living; they provide both information and referral (i.e. I & R) which includes "providing the enquirer with some kind of linkage with the service best equipped to deal with the problem." (30:9); and they frequently utilize "a card index of organizations as a means of providing information as opposed to reliance solely upon the printed word". (30:9)

The same project has also been the subject of an evaluation by Childers of Drexel University. (5) Writing in 1976 he notes:

> It was perhaps in the process of casting about for new roles for the public library in the late 1960s and early 1970s that some librarians fixed upon the idea of assuming an I. & R. function. (5:272-273)

He notes later that the way of carrying out this function "varied strikingly from city to city." (5:276), for example, some libraries

thought that voter registration was a valid component and some not; some felt that such a service was most appropriate for disadvantaged groups and others not; some libraries tended "to view I. & R. work as a legitimate part of traditional reference service" (5:277), whereas others "felt I. & R. was an outlandish caprice." (5:277)

Childers notes also the need for adequate mehcanisms for collecting, organizing and up-dating information. He makes this point when he draws a distinction between a community information service and a traditional library service. He says:

> ... the information service in libraries and materials centers is overwhelmingly document-based. ... A major characteristic of an I. & R. agency is that it ordinarily draws on unpublished, rapidly changing store of data in responding to inquiries. (6:1)

Two areas that he lists as priorities for further investigation are "Optimum file arrangement and access." (5:287) and "Format of the resource file." (5:287). The overviews by Walley and Childers highlight the diversity of services covered by the term I. & R., or, community information service: a situation which is probably to be expected in any developing area. Writing in 1975 Croneberger notes:

> There is a disturbing approach in teaching, writing, and talking about information and referral which we call the "What information and referral means to me" approach.... This approach frequently includes rhapsodic accounts of "how we done it good (whatever it was we done)". What is needed is honest tough-minded evaluation of successes and failures. This cannot possibly be done without clear definitions of what it is we are trying to do, ... (8:1984)

He proceeds to argue that there is no single model for a community information service because each service will vary with the particular community being served. However, he outlines factors which he believes "apply in varying degrees to most library systems." (8:1985) The first of these is the need to settle on common goals, methods and terminology and he argues that these are essential because:

> ... they have already been established in the field of information and referral, which exists outside the traditional sphere of libraries. ... It has been developed and practiced for at least 30 years by various types of service agencies. (8:1985)

He points out that the information component of direct social service has long been recognised by the helping professions and notes: "If libraries are going to share in meeting the need for information and referral, they must speak a common language with the others in the field." (8:1985)

Bowen at Leeds Polytechnic argues along similar lines to Croneberger: " ... any study of community information services should be concerned not only with how services are managed effectively but also what kind of services are being provided."(2:16) She argues that library-based community information services can be seen as lying along a continuum ranging from being primarily concerned with emphasizing improved access to information to emphasizing advocacy for the stand of a particular individual or group. Underlying that continuum one can see another continuum, namely, the extent to which the library is to be involved with the purpose for which the information is being sought. Croneberger appears to be touching on the same topic when he writes:

> The link between the person and the service is made up of information. It is because the success or failure of the information link depends on communication involving specific individuals in specific problem situations, that we emphasize that information and referral is a process and not a product. The distribution of pamphlets describing social services, the addition of a directory of community services to the reference collection, or the addition of a desk labeled "Information" where help with the card catalog or yellow pages is available are all fine services, but are not information and referral.(8:1985)

He adds :

> The data base which is essential to the provision of I & R is a reference tool to be used along with others, but it is the use and not the existence of the tool that counts.(8:1986)

However, he proceeds to make clear that this does not mean that he sees I & R as involving social work: I & R he sees as diagnostic whereas social work involves treatment.

If it is agreed that information is a process and not an entity then the line of thinking of Bowen and Croneberger can be seen to be applicable to all information services and not to be restricted to community information services only.

That recognition of the information component that Croneberger felt to be true of the non-library sector in the United States is evidently true of Australia judging by the literature on the topic that has emanated from that sector. It is interesting that this literature generally takes as its starting point the issue or problem about which some current or future information service is going to be providing information. Then the matter of creating or adapting some system to collect and maintain and disseminate the required information is broached. For example, one report notes:

> In the same ways as any other industry can, the human services can be divided into producers (e.g.

> agencies , groups), and the consumers (people with needs), where an exchange occurs between them. To a large degree, the effectiveness of this exchange, between the producer of services and the consumer, relies on information (e.g. what is available, where to go, who to see etc.)
> That "information" is a vital commodity is being recognised more as is the need for "information systems" to handle it efficiently. (29:7)

Another writer proposes to:

> outline ... a workable design for achieving the dual purpose of effectively connecting consumers to appropriate services and operationally generating data for the purpose of planning and managing human service delivery.(1:13)

And proceeds:

> The critical elements in the developments of this co-ordinated service system are the human service information system and the planning information system.(1:14)

The phrase "power over information"is used repeatedly:

> Without power over information the individual cannot seek effective help or correct abuses, benefit from the protection and services the government offers, and get the most from his resources.(1:17)

Another report notes the danger that vested interests might attempt to control the development of human services information systems and thus "the capacity to control resources, personnel and through these, power and influence". (28:1) Another reads "Access to information gives power. To the extent that information is power, its restriction can distort power relationships."(13:1.6)

The fragmentation and diversity of service delivery is noted repeatedly and the need for a co-ordinated information system stressed: an information system that can show the user all the options available and allow him to make informed decisions and thus retain power.

Consistent with the attitude that information is a major weapon in the struggle for the individual to retain power in a complex society an emphasis is placed on facilitating theindividual's access to information rather than on theindividual's access to an information service. It is noticeable that in the non-library literature terms such as publicity, promotion etc., are virtually absent.

The literature contains a number of discussions on Regional Information Systems (10; 14; 16; 20;24): common to them all is the concern with developing mechanisms to facilitate the flow of information from and to the individual. Thus the mechanics of the system - the structure through which information is conveyed; the way the information is organized; the number and nature of access points - are seen from the

viewpoint of the issue or problem to which the information process is relevant. The emphasis on a common issue orientated classification and indexing system is a natural consequence of such concern. Likewise, the perception of libraries as having a limited role is equally understandable.

Integral to all models of a Regional Information System is the commitment to co-operation and co-ordination among service and information agencies: equally integral is the awareness that information about services, problems, issues etc., is often conveyed directly from person to person. Thus, the word "user" in this context means "user of the information" and not "user of the information service".

The Australian library originated literature offers yet another perspective and in those papers that describe the efforts and procedures adopted by particular libraries (19; 22) it is interesting to note the emphasis on products, for example, card files, directories. However, again there is the emphasis on the need to co-operate with other agencies. (4; 12; 15; 26; 31) For example, Reid in the conclusion to his 1976 article notes that:

> The information process, particularly as it affects information for everyday living, will concern many agencies, government and non-government, professional and volunteer, formal and informal, and there must be co-ordination of effort. (26:35-36)

This theme is echoed in a recent study (3) into libraries and information services in the North Coast region of New South Wales: the bulk of recommendations are concerned with co-operation since "They reflect the emphasis of the Study, i.e. co-operation between libraries and information agencies in the North Coast Region."(3:228)

In Western Australia a group of library and non-library information workers, called CISS-West, have held regular meetings to share expertise and information and to provide a focus for community information activities in Western Australia. In South Australia the Department of Community Development has established a Working Party on Information Services on which both library and non-library information workers are represented. These activities suggest that the words may be beginning to have some effect.

3. Aims and methods of the study.

i) Aims

The study aimed to achieve the following:

1. - to collect data on public libraries currently offering, or contributing to, a community information service in order to present a factual overview.

2. - analyse the data in order to assess the extent to which the following factors influence the success or otherwise of public libary involvment in community information:

   i) degree of co-operation and co-ordination with other agencies

   ii) methods of collecting and up-dating information

   iii) structure of classification and indexing systems

   iv) quality of publicity and promotion

   v) measures of evaluation of service

3. - on the basis of knowledge obtained through 1 and 2 above, and with the assistance of the collective experience of CISS members develop guidelines for:

   i) co-operation and co-ordination between libraries and other agencies

   ii) the collecting and up-dating of information

   iii) a 'best practise' classification and indexing system

   iv) publicity and promotion

   v) initiating, expanding and evaluating services

4. - communicate and promote these guidelines to public librarians and other community information workers by publications, workshops, seminars and other appropriate means.

ii) Methods

A questionnaire survey was the primary method chosen to obtain data on public library-based community information services. This was supplemented by statistical data supplied by the Public Libraries Division of the State Library of New South Wales and by observations of libraries and discussions with librarians carried out in conjunction with visits made by the Information Services Consultant of the Division. CISS activities were a further source of information.

As a social science survey the study was inevitably confronted with the problems inherent in surveying a living entity. An analogy can be drawn between this situation and Heisenberg's "Principle of Uncertainty". His principle states that the momentum and position of a particle can never be exactly determined at the same instant. Similarly, when data about an on-going activity is captured and documented it inevitably assumes a static nature: the reality continues changing whilst the words are frozen. Aware

of this quandary a second method used in the study was the inter-active process, that is, working jointly with non-library information workers on information-related projects. This method was not spelt out in detail in the original proposal: it was a natural CISS method of operating and it was assumed that such activities would continue.

One purpose of the process was to further develop mutual understanding between library and non-library information agencies: a "traditional" CISS function. Another purpose was to build upon existing knowledge of non-library community information activities in order to maintain and develop the perspective within which the public library role, which the study was attempting to clarify, has to be seen.

4. Limitations of the study

The main limitations of the study are due to the limited resources that were known to be available at the time that the proposal was formulated and funding sought. Thus, the study has been restricted to New South Wales and further, no attempt has been made to systematically collect data on non-library participation in community information services in that State. Only one segment of the community information world has been systematically surveyed: whether the characteristics of this segment are typical of that world is not known.

Other limitations are intrinsic to the methods of investigation adopted. No attempt was made to survey the effectiveness to the user of the information provided by library-based community information services. Thus, impressions of the quality of service are based purely on the quality of input measures. For example, it has been assumed that an up-to-date and organized information file is likely to yield more up-to-date and accurate information than an out-of-date and dis-organized file. This assumption has not, however, been investigated. Hence it has not been possible to adhere to the initial aims of examining and developing guidelines for service evaluation.

The activity of working through inter-active processes is essentially a subjective experience that cannot be isolated from the personalities involved. Thus, the methods used and the problems encountered could have been different had other people experienced the process. This aspect of the study is virtually a case report with the attendant values and limitations.

CHAPTER 2 THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

1. Aims and Methods

i) Aims

In order to collect the data necessary for a factual overview of public library participation in community information services it was decided to survey some of the relevant activities carried out by public libraries. To this end information had to be sought on whether public libraries were receiving requests for community information; whether such queries were referred to other agencies and vice-versa; whether libraries engaged in any co-operative activities with other agencies; how information files were organized, and up-dated; the range of publicity activities undertaken; some aspects of staffing and record-keeping; and finally, an attempt to guage attitudes towards the role of the library in areas such as referral and follow-up.

ii) Choice of Method

A questionnaire sent out by mail is obviously the most practical method of gathering a large amount of data from a number of libraries, in a relatively short time, and in a form which can readily be analyzed. The drawbacks to questionnaire surveys are several and although they cannot be totally surmounted can, however, be mitigated.

One major drawback is that a 100% response rate is unlikely. Another is that the questionnaire format may entirely miss subtle points and shades of meaning that may well underlie responses that have been constrained into "Yes/No", "Please tick", "Please rank" etc., formats: a format necessary for the answers to be elicited in a manner that can readily be analyzed. In an attempt to mitigate these drawbacks a carefully worded covering letter (See Appendix A) was sent, follow up telephone calls were made and a number of unstructured items were included in the questionnaire to allow for personal elaborations and explanations. Further, the questionnaire data was to be used within the context of the existing knowledge accumulated by CISS of the population being surveyed and was supplemented by observation and examination of a number of libraries.

iii) The Survey Population

The aim of the study called for a survey of the total population of public library central services in New South Wales: a total of 35 metropolitan libraries and 68 country libraries. Obviously, many branch libraries are not intended as information service points and thus such a questionnaire would be quite inappropriate. It was decided that the librarian at each central library service was in the best position to make such a judgement and accordingly sufficient copies for each branch library were sent to the central library service

and the covering letter suggested that they be distributed, or not, as the librarian saw fit. A total of 82 additional questionnaires were thus sent for metropolitan branch libraries and 118 for country branch libraries.

iv) Mailing and Response

The questionnaires were mailed as follows:

19, October, 1978	----	117 to metropolitan libraries
	----	186 to country libraries
TOTAL	----	303 to all public libraries in N.S.W.

Reminder telephone calls were made as follows:

22, November, 1978	----	9 metropolitan central library services
28, November, 1978	----	25 country central library services

January, 12, 1979 was chosen as the cut-off date for replies and by that date 35 replies had been received from metropolitan central library services (100%); 62 replies from country central library services (91%); 33 replies from metropolitan branches (40%); 62 replies from country branches (53%); 1 bookmobile and 3 anonymous questionnaires. Overall the response was 196 replies (65%).

Of these 196 replies 5 had to be omitted from the final analyses; all from libraries for whom the questionnaire was obviously not appropriate. This left a total of 191 (63%) of usable questionnaires.

Not all respondents answered all questions. In some cases this was because not all questions were relevant to all libraries: in these cases figures for responses are also given in whole numbers. Percentages alone will only be used when the question was relevant to the total sample: if no replies were received this is indicated by a "no reply" category.

Data was coded and SPSS, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, then used for statistical analyses. Where possible questionnaires were coded to indicate whether they were metropolitan or country central or branch services. Three country central services and their branches were coded as metropolitan because of the nature of their environments. Statistical data was added for central library services regarding expenditure per capita and size of population served according to categories supplied by the Public Libraries Division.

v) The Questionnaire

The questionnaire, pilot-tested in 6 public libraries in Victoria and 4 in the A.C.T., was designed to elicit responses from all libraries, including those that did not specifically provide a community information service. Thus items not specifically about a current community information service, but relevant to the future provision of such a service were included, for example, methods of publicity.

One assumption made was that since the respondents were librarians they would be more familiar with thinking about their information giving and seeking activities than non-library respondents to similar surveys. Thus, many of the items requested a considerable amount of detail: for example the table in Question 2. This assumption appears to have been justified in so far as can be guaged by the responses, for example, no replies were received to the effect that any particular question was impossible to answer, ridiculous or irrelevant. These results corroborate the results from some previous surveys (17; 18) that if complex questionnaire items are designed in such a way that the responses can be provided in a simple form, for example, ticks, crosses etc., then they can elicit a good response rate and yield interesting data.

The results also corroborate previous surveys in suggesting that open-ended questions, even if simply worded and requesting uncomplicated data, elicit a lower response rate. For example, the question that elicited the lowest response rate (52%) was 14b. Both this item and Question 14a were worded positively, that is, asking for information about successes and future ventures, rather than problems or failures, in the hope of eliciting responses. However, neither item can be judged successful in terms of response rate.

Another item that was unsuccessful was the attempt to elicit, in Question 2, whether the library referred the requester to another agency, or whether it sought the information from another agency on behalf of the requester. Unfortunately, the second part of the question was open to two interpretations: that the requester himself got the information from another agency, or, that the library got the information on behalf of the requester from another agency. Thus, no attempt has been made to break-down the data into these sub-categories.

The final item on the questionnaire was an attempt to survey attitudes. Several respondents, as well as ticking the appropriate answer, also felt a need to provide some written proviso. The success or otherwise of this item can only be judged equivocal and the wording in need of further refinement.

2. Survey Findings

Detailed results are not reported for each item on the questionnaire: only those items which led to worthwhile comment or suggested conclusions are discussed below. Full results are reported in Appendix B.

i - Frequence and nature of requests for community information received by public libraries

The first item on the questionnaire gave a broad definition of community information, as "information for everyday living, that is, information about the services, programmes and activities available in the community", and asked respondents to indicate when they had last received a request for such information. Over-all 93% of respondents had received a request at least within the last year. Details are presented in the following Table.

Percentage of libraries who received a request within the last:

Day	Week	Month	Year	Not Specified
18%	33%	25%	17%	.5

TABLE 1 Frequency of requests for community information

One way of looking at this is that over 40% of public libraries in New South Wales, at the time of the survey, had not received a request for community information within the last week: and this despite the very broad definition given.

It would be interesting to find out how this level of activity compares with "traditional reference": would it also be true that on any randomly chosen day only 18% of public libraries had been asked a reference query? Unfortunately, this question cannot be answered. It has been noted that "Reference services in public libraries are one of many areas neglected by researchers in Australia ... "(32:3)

However, a study relating to the quality of public library service in Victoria concluded "data collected during this survey suggests that the public library service in Victoria is operating at a relatively low level ... "(23:117)

The most common request was for information about local sport, cultural and social activities: 81% of libraries reporting that they had received such a request with more libraries reporting that they had received the request within the last week, than within the last day, or within the last month, or longer. Information about educational courses, facilities etc. had been requested of 77% of libraries, and information about government regulations, members of Parliament, elections etc. of 73%: in both cases the mode being within the last

month. The next most common type of query was for information about health and welfare services: 70% of libraries reported such a query with the mode being within the last month. Requests for information about employment, pensions and benefits, and legal services tended to be requested of fewer libraries. Details are presented in Table 2. (See page 15)

It appears that the public tend to see the library as a source of information about sport, cultural and educational matters and matters pertaining to government. This is in line with the findings of a recent Victorian study. (53) It also appears that other libraries and non-library agencies tend to see libraries in the same light. Responses to the question "Have any agencies or organizations asked you for help in answering their own community information queries within the last year?" indicate that the greatest number of such requests for assistance were:

83 requests for help with information about sport, cultural and social activities
54 requests for help with information about educational facilities
45 requests for help with information about government matters
32 requests for help with information about health and welfare services

with requests for assistance with information about employment, pensions and benefits and legal services markedly fewer.

ii - Referrals from and to libraries and other agencies

Consistent with the above pattern is the pattern that emerges from looking at the number and nature of requests where either the requester was referred to another agency or a library referred to the resources of another agency in attempting to answer the query.

Libraries were more likely to answer the more commonly requested types of information, that is, sport and cultural, educational, and government from their own resources than to refer. Table 3 presents some details. (See page 16)

As table 3 indicates government departments and Community Aid and Information Centres (CAIC)* were the agencies to whom, proportionately, most referrals were made. If we look at the total number of referrals for all types of information we find the data presented in Table 4. (See page 17)

If we look at the use made of libraries by other agencies in answering their own community information queries the pattern is somewhat different. In all 43% of respondents indicated that they had been thus contacted. CAIC were the agencies most frequently named with the largest category of queries relating to information about sport, cultural and social activities. Next came requests from Local Councils for information relating to government matters. Then requests from local groups relating to information about sport, cultural and social activities. Other agencies were named less frequently. Further details are presented in Table 5. (See page 18)

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* CAIC is used to cover agencies variously known as Community Aid and Information Centre, Community Information Centre, Neighbourhood Centre etc.

Number of libraries receiving a query within the last:

Information about	Day	Week	Month	Longer	Not specified
Local sport, cultural and social activities N = 155(81%)	15	59	45	35	1
Educational course, facilities etc. N = 145(77%)	12	47	56	28	2
Govt. regulations, members of Parlt., elections etc. N = 140(73%)	12	40	51	34	3
Health and welfare services. N = 133(70%)	13	40	54	23	3
Employment etc. N = 96(50%)	1	25	28	39	3
Pensions, benefits etc. N = 94(49%)	3	9	35	44	3
Legal services etc. N = 91(48%)	7	18	34	31	1

TABLE 2 Nature and frequency of queries received from individual users

Information about	Answered Query from own Resources only	Referred Only	Used own Resources & Referred as well	Agency to which greatest No. of Referrals made
Local Sport and Cultural Activities N: 155(81%)	100 *(64%)	38 (24%)	17 (10%)	Local Groups
Educational Courses Facilities etc. N: 145(77%)	94 (64%)	36 (24%)	15 (10%)	Govt. Dept
Govt. regulations, Members of Parlt, Elections, Local Govt. etc. N: 140(73%)	84 (60%)	38 (27%)	18 (12%)	Local Council
Health & Welfare Services N: 133(70%)	54 (41%)	60 (45%)	19 (14%)	Community Aid and Information Centre (CAIC)
Employment etc, N: 96(50%)	29 (30%)	61 (63%)	6 (6%)	Govt. Dept
Pensions, Benefits etc. N: 94(49%)	37 (33%)	50 (53%)	7 (7%)	Govt. Dept.
Legal Services etc. N: 91(48%)	34 (37%)	52 (57%)	5 (5%)	Community Aid and Information Centre (CAIC)

* % within table = % of libraries who had a query in each subject area.

TABLE 3 QUERIES REFERRED TO OTHER AGENCIES

Agency	Total Number of queries	Largest Category of queries
A Government Department	157	Employment - 40
A CAIC	90	Health and welfare - 31
A Local Council	78	Government - 23
Another library	46	Government - 11 Education - 11
Local groups	41	Sport, cultural and social - 22
New South Wales Council of Social Services	26	Pensions and benefits - 18
New South Wales Government Sales and Information Centre	10	Government - 8

TABLE 4 AGENCIES TO WHOM QUERIES ARE REFERRED

Agency	Total number of queries	Largest category of queries
CAIC	73	Sport, cultural and social - 22
Local council	71	Government - 25
Local Groups	45	Sport, cultural and social - 17
Another library	38	Sport, cultural and social - 10
A Government Department	26	Sport, cultural and social - 8
New South Wales Council of Social Services	6	Sport, cultural and social and health and welfare - 2 queries each
New South Wales Government Sales and Information Centre	5	Sport, cultural and social - 1 query

TABLE 5 NATURE OF QUERIES RECEIVED FROM OTHER AGENCIES

Matching the two patterns together one can generalize and say that the highest volume of two-way traffic is between libraries and CAIC, followed by local councils. When the CAIC initiates the contact the query will, in about a third of the cases, be about sport, cultural and social activities. When the library initiates the contact the query will, in about a third of the cases, be about health and welfare services. Contacts between local councils and libraries will, in about a third of the cases, be about government matters. The agency that is most used by libraries is a government department. The volume of traffic with other agencies is lighter.

Over-all when another agency contacts a library the queries tend to relate to sport, cultural and social activities; educational facilities; and government matters. When the library contacts another agency the queries tend to relate to employment, pensions and benefits, and legal services.

iii - Co-operative activities

Libraries were asked about co-operation with other agencies in four areas - directory production, publicity activities, sharing information files, and giving and seeking assistance in the collection and organization of information.

Directory Production A total of 70 libraries (37%) indicated that they had assisted in collecting information for a directory in their local area; 47 libraries (25%) indicated that they had assisted in indexing or organizing the information. However, only 47 libraries were able, or willing, to name the directory: of these 28 had helped both in collecting and in indexing; 18 had helped only in collecting; one library had helped only in indexing. Since 160 libraries (84%) indicated that there was a local directory for their area one can only conclude that participation in directory production is not a major area of co-operative activity.

Publicity Activities A total of 141 libraries (74%) indicated that they shared some publicity activities with other agencies. Of these 139 proceeded to describe their activities: 105 indicated that they displayed, within the library, posters, leaflets etc., advertising the services of other agencies; 19 indicated that they displayed posters, leaflets etc., advertising library services in other agencies; 8 indicated other more active albeit solo types of publicity, for example, items in the local newspaper. Only 7 libraries gave examples of joint activities, for example, joint T.V. spots, collaboration on information stalls and so on. Thus, joint publicity activities were also reported by a minority of libraries. Descriptions of publicity activities sometimes mentioned an agency and sometimes a subject-area. The most frequently mentioned agency was a CAIC (14 times) and the most frequently mentioned subject area was education (12 times), followed by cultural, and arts and crafts subjects (11 times).

Sharing information files In all 18 libraries indicated that they shared their pamphlet files with other agencies and 24 libraries indicated that they shared their card files. Of these libraries 28 named the agencies: again a CAIC was the agency most frequently named (27 times).

Giving and seeking assistance in the collection and organization of information Being contacted for assistance in collecting or organizing information or contacting another agency for such assistance was also a minority activity. Only 56 libraries (29%) had been contacted and only 45 libraries (24%) had contacted another agency. The most common contact was from and to a CAIC. When the CAIC initiated the contact the purpose most frequently named (13 times) was for help in organizing files. When the library initiated the contact the purpose most frequently named (10 times) was for help in collecting information about local groups.

iv - File organization and up-dating

Only 78 libraries (41%) indicated that they had a collection, other than directories, etc., of information about community services, programmes and activities. Of these libraries 40 (21%) indicated that they maintained a card file: the file being available to the public in just over half the cases. A pamphlet file was maintained by 60 libraries and was generally available to the public.

When asked to indicate how the headings for the card or pamphlet file were selected, only 16 libraries mentioned using some standard system. Library systems, such as, Sears, Library of Congress were mentioned by 8 libraries; the LOCOM system, or one of its earlier variants, of the New South Wales Council of Social Service was mentioned by 7 libraries; one library mentioned another system. The majority of libraries (26) selected headings on the basis of most common usage.

File up-dating appeared to be seen as a problem. The most commonly named methods were informal person-to-person contact (12 mentions) and scanning local newspapers (7 mentions). These were also the two most common methods indicated, in response to Question 7, for collecting and up-dating community information in general - 56% and 50% of respondents respectively. The main problems given were lack of time (16 mentions); the frequent changes in the details of service operations (9 mentions); lack of sufficient library staff (8 mentions); and lack of co-operation from other agencies in supplying information (7 mentions).

In summary it appears that the systematic creation and maintenance of community information files is a minority activity in public libraries and that lack of resources is seen as a problem.

v - Publicity

In all 126 libraries (66%) replied to the question "What have you found to be the most effective methods of publicizing the information services offered by your library?". The question was worded in an attempt to elicit information about publicity for library services in general and not to be restricted to community information services. This appears to be the way respondents interpreted the question.

Of the 126 respondents 7 indicated that they did not engage in any publicity activities; the 119 who did publicize their services provided 208 instances. Details are presented in Table 6.

Publicity activities	Number of times mentioned
Displays, posters etc., within the library	57
Personal word of mouth	44
Newspaper advertisements and articles	38
Radio	13
Displays, posters etc., in shopping areas, agencies	11
Newsletter, information leaflets	9
Visits, talks etc. to groups and organizations	9
Notices with Council rates etc.	7
T.V.	6
Improved services	6

TABLE 6 CURRENT LIBRARY PUBLICITY ACTIVITIES

All other activities were mentioned by less than 5 respondents.

Libraries were also asked what type of publicity they would like to undertake assuming that they had additional resources. Of the 100 libraries (52%) who replied to the question 97 (51%) provided 169 instances, the details of which are shown in Table 7.

Publicity activities		Number of times mentioned
Newspaper advertisements and articles		31
Service provision		29
Up-to-date information	13	
More/better staff	8	
Improved services in general	8	
Radio		18
T.V.		15
Newsletters, circulars etc.		11
Media		11
Displays, posters etc.,		11
Professionally produced signs posters, notices etc.,		10
More visits to groups		8
Letter-box drops		5

TABLE 7 PUBLICITY ACTIVITIES THAT LIBRARIES WOULD LIKE TO UNDERTAKE

All other activities were mentioned by less than 5 respondents.

Over-all one can say that current publicity activities are more likely to make use of the printed word than other forms of communication. It appears that a number of libraries feel that improved services are a necessary prelude to the publicity thereof and it is noticeable that more libraries suggest that they would like to make use of T.V. and radio than appear to be able to do so now.

vi - Staff and record keeping

Libraries were asked two questions in this respect. First they were asked whether there was a member of staff with special responsibility for community information: in all 61 libraries (32%) replied "Yes". This does not, however, mean that there are 61 positions of Community Information Librarian in New South Wales since in many cases the Reference or Branch Librarian was named; only 5 libraries had a position with the word "Community" in the title. The second question asked libraries whether a record was kept of the number and nature of community information queries received: 25 libraries (13%) replied "Yes". Here again it would be interesting to see how these figures compare to "traditional reference". Standing "alone" it is hard to derive any generalization other than that it seems to re-inforce the general trend emerging from the questionnaire findings that an active and systematic community information service is a minority activity in public libraries in New South Wales.

vii - Attitudes

The final item on the questionnaire was an attempt to elicit some expression of attitudes towards activities associated with responding to an information request: in particular activities, such as referral and follow-up, encountered in non-library based community information services.

Respondents were given 8 statements and asked to indicate the extent to which they "Strongly agree", were "Uncertain", "Disagree" or "Strongly disagree". Four of the statements were concerned with referral and follow-up; two statements were concerned with the extent to which the librarian needs to know the purpose for which the information is being sought; one statement was concerned with a print-orientated approach and one statement with an in-library approach.

The statements that elicited more "Strongly agree" and "Agree" responses than "Strongly disagree" or "Disagree" responses were:

> A librarian should be sufficiently familiar with the welfare services available to be able to direct people to the best service for their needs. (84% and 5%)
>
> A librarian should always attempt to direct people to a relevant welfare service as well as providing information on the topic. (73% and 16%)
>
> As much as possible one should answer all queries that come into the library from the library's own resources. (69% and 21%)

> A librarian should always attempt to provide printed sources of information. (68% and 24%)
>
> A librarian is invading the user's personal privacy once he/she starts to ask the user their reason for wanting information. (52% and 27%)

Thus, it appears that referral to service agencies is seen as an appropriate library activity by the majority of respondents. It also appears that libraries favour attempting to answer all queries from the library's own resources and favour attempting to provide printed sources of information when possible.

The suggestion that a librarian is invading privacy once an attempt is made to find out the purpose for which the information is being sought elicited an "Uncertain" from 16% of the respondents. The other version of the question elicited an 18% "Uncertain" response. This question read:

> In order to direct a user to appropriate sources of information a librarian should first find out why the user wants the information.

Moreover, 41% "Strongly disagree" or "Disagree" with the statement and 37% "Strongly agree" or "Agree". Attitudes towards this issue can perhaps be described as varied.

Statements concerned with follow-up also elicited a considerable "Uncertain" response.

> After referring a person to a welfare service a librarian Should follow-up to ensure that the service provided really did meet the person's needs. (16%)
>
> After referring a user to another library a librarian should follow-up to ensure that the information provided really did meet the user's needs. (15%)

However, since over 50% of respondents "Strongly disagree" or "Disagree" with both statements, it appears that follow-up is not currently an accepted activity for most libraries.

If community information services are in an embryonic stage of development, as the questionnaire survey findings suggest, then the uncertainty over attitudes and activities often considered more prominent in community information services than in "traditional reference" is perhaps to be expected.

viii - Pattern of activity.

An attempt was made to see whether patterns of activity varied consistently among libraries with the presence or absence of certain factors. Accordingly, chi-squared tests of significance were run on a number of variables. (See Appendix C) Due to small sample sizes it was not possible to achieve statistically meaningful results on many of the tests. Over-all, however, it appeared that central library services were more likely to receive a query within the last day or week, as opposed to month or year, than branch services; and were more likely to have been asked for assistance in answering queries by another agency. Metropolitan services were more likely to have a card file; a member of staff with special responsibility for community information; and to keep a record of queries received.

ix - Summary of questionnaire findings

The following points summarize briefly the main questionnaire findings:

i - Frequency and nature of requests

Over 40% of public libraries in New South Wales, at the time of the survey, had not received a request for community information within the last week. Only 18% had received such a query within the last day and so it can safely be said that responding to a community information query was not a daily activity for most public libraries.

Analyses of the nature of queries suggest that the library tended to be seen by the public more as a source of information about sport, cultural and educational matters and matters relating to government, than as a source of information about employment, pensions and benefits, and legal services.

ii - Referrals from and to libraries and other agencies

The highest volume of two-way traffic was between libraries and CAIC, followed by local councils. When the CAIC initiated the contact the query was, in about a third of the cases, about sport, cultural and social activities. When the library initiated the contact the query was, in about a third of the cases, about health and welfare services. Contacts between local councils and libraries were, in about a third of the cases, about government matters. The agency most used by libraries was a government department. The volume of traffic with other agencies was lighter.

Over-all when another agency contacted a library the queries tended to relate to sport, cultural and social activities; educational facilities; and government matters. When the library contacted another

agency the queries tended to relate to employment, pensions and benefits, and legal services.

iii - Co-operative activities

Co-operative activities were indicated by a minority of respondents. The most common activity appeared to be assisting with collecting information for local directories - 37% of respondents. Joint publicity activities were mentioned by a minority of respondents. In all, 28 libraries indicated that they shared their information files with another agency: mostly with a CAIC. Assisting another agency in collecting or organizing information was mentioned by 29% of respondents: with a CAIC being the most frequently named agency. A CAIC was also the agency most commonly contacted for similar help by libraries.

iv - File organization and up-dating

A card file listing services, programmes and activites in the community was maintained by only 40 libraries (21%) with a minority of these indicating that they used a standardized indexing system. The most commonly named methods for up-dating were informal person-to-person contact and scanning local newspapers. Problems involved in up-dating included lack of time, frequent changes in the details of service operations, and lack of staff.

v - Publicity

Current publicity activities were more likely to make use of the printed word than other forms of communication. It appeared that a number of libraries felt that improved service provision was a necessary prelude to the publicity thereof. More use of the mass media was indicated as an activity that libraries would like to undertake granted the necessary resources.

vi - Staff and record-keeping

Only 5 libraries had a position with the word "Community" in the title. A record of queries received was maintained by 25 libraries (13%).

vii - Attitudes

Referral appeared to be regarded as an appropriate library activity by the majority of respondents. Libraries appeared to favour attempting to answer all queries from the libraries own resources and attempting to provide printed sources of information when possible. Attitudes towards the extent to which a librarian should elicit the purpose for which information is being sought appeared to be varied. Follow-up did not appear to be an accepted activity for libraries.

viii - Patterns of activity

An attempt to discern patterns of activity among libraries was

larely unsuccessful. However, it appeared that central library services and metropolitan services were more active in certain areas.

3. Implications of the survey

The main conclusion of the questionnaire survey can only be that the original subjective impression, that library-based community information services are in an uneven state of development has been validated, in so far as the questionnaire yielded valid data, on a more widespread and objective basis. The findings of the survey reveal that the level of activity of public-library based community information services is too low for it to be possible to gather the data upon which to base any statistically valid conclusions about the characteristics of such services, and even less of potential developments.

Nevertheless findings from the survey have implications for the development of library-based community information services.

It appears that libraries tend to be seen, by both the public and other agencies, as sources of particular types of information: namely, sport, cultural and social activities, educational facilities and government matters. Libraries themselves refer to the resources of other agencies particularly when handling queries regarding employment, pensions and benefits, and legal services. Information about health and welfare services appears to be less clearly demarcated. If it is accepted, as was proposed earlier, that the scope and volume of information necessary for everyday living in our complex society is such that it is not possible for any one service to collect and maintain all the relevant information, then the above findings have implications for the possible development of specializations among information agencies.

It is interesting that a CAIC was the agency most named as a contact by public libraries: the agency from whom most referrals were received and to whom the second largest number of referrals were made; the agency most named in publicity activities and with whom files were shared; the agency most named as contacting a library for assistance in collecting or organizing information and the agency most named by libraries for similar assistance.

Granted the general caveat of generalizing from limited data the outline of a possible network of referrals and co-operative activities can be discerned. Again, aware of the caveat, it is interesting that the largest category of CAIC contacts with libraries for assistance in collecting or organizing information was concerned with assistance with indexing and selecting subject-headings for information files.

The largest category of library contacts with CAIC for similar assistance was concerned with help in collecting information about local groups. Perhaps librarian's skills in organizing information and CAIC knowledge of local activities are potentially fruitful areas for co-operative activities.

However, it is worth remembering that only 16 libraries indicated that they used a standardized system for organizing their information files, and thus the availability to other agencies of library skills in this area cannot be considered certain. Among the problems mentioned, in regard to file up-dating, were lack of time and lack of staff and this likewise has implications for co-operative activities.

Attitudes elicited towards referral suggested that it was an accepted library activity whereas follow-up did not appear to be similarly accepted. There are implications here for the type of community information service that may develop in public libraries. A majority of respondents felt that a librarian should be sufficiently familiar with the welfare services available to be able to direct people to the best service for their needs. In this context it is worth noting that the extent to which a librarian should attempt to elicit the purpose for which the information is being sought appeared to be a matter of some uncertainty. In view of the complexity of welfare needs and the variability and range of services available eliciting such purposes would seem to be important. To attempt to direct people to the best service for their needs could raise difficulties when considered within the context of a traditional public library philosophy of presenting all available options and all sides of an issue

CHAPTER 3 THE INTER-ACTIVE PROCESS AND OBSERVATION

1. Aims and Methods

i Aims

Working jointly with non-library information workers on information-related projects was a natural continuation of a CISS activity. However, the level of activity increased as it was pursued with more definite aims within the context of the study. It became far more time-consuming, illuminating and problem-raising than was originally expected.

The aims of the activity were threefold. It was hoped that the knowledge and skills of librarianship would be of help to non-library agencies establishing or improving their information services. It was also an attempt to foster mutual understanding among library and non-library agencies. Another aim was to maintain and develop a knowledge of the non-library sector's activities in order to have a perspective against which to attempt to delineate the potential role of the public library.

These purposes were ones which it was believed any public library engaging in, or embarking on, a community information service would need to consider. Thus these activities were seen to mirror broadly what would be involved for any public library attempting to co-operate with non-library agencies. Needless to say CISS members were imbued with a sense of the value of co-operative activities in improving the just distribution of the critical resource "information".

As the Study progressed, and involvement with non-library agencies became closer, it became apparent that working jointly on information-related projects, though a necessary activity, was not in itself sufficient to achieve the original purposes. Library skills would not be considered of value by non-library agencies until mutual understanding had been developed: nor, of course, could the appropriate skills be appropriately offered. To develop this understanding it was necessary not only to be informed about each other's activities, but also, to understand each other's objectives and recognize the issues underlying the implicit value-judgements involved.

ii Methods

The initial method used in the inter-active process was to continue, albeit more intensively, the consultancy role for which CISS had been increasingly called upon over the three years of its existence. This involved all CISS members at times, but especially the Study Steering Committee and the Consultant. Since that Committee and the consultant were all librarians this resulted in a group of "CISS librarians" providing a consultancy function. Not surprisingly

therefore, most of the requests for assistance related to library skills and techniques: in particular requests for assistance in organizing information files as an awareness developed that librarians had skills in this area.

A number of factors were at play in making the organization of information files a matter of concern, for example, the awareness of the importance of information in enabling people to make their own decisions, governement funding to various agencies for an information component and so on.

A significant factor was the presence of two systems for organizing services and information. One system, U.W.A.S.I.S. (United Way of America Services Identification System) was a goal orientated classification scheme that had been adopted, with modifications, by the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) and by some local centres in other States. This scheme, designed for classifying services, divides human services into the 8 broad goals that those services are, or should be, striving to achieve. The classification and indexing languages are thus goal orientated rather than service or problem orientated. For example, Accommodation is a service related to the problem of lack of housing. However, in U.W.A.S.I.S. neither the service nor the problem are described in those terms, instead such services are listed under the purpose of the service, Housing Services System, within the broad goal that such services aim to achieve, namely Optimal Provision of Basic Material Needs.

The other system, LOCOM, a system for organizing community resources, was developed for the New South Wales Council of Social Service (NCOSS) by two librarians who had both had close association with community information centres. As well as giving guidelines for collecting, processing and retrieving information it also included suggestions regarding equipment, training of volunteers and so on. A major part of the system was the alphabetico-specific Subject Headings List for organizing card files. The system was intended for use by the Local Community Services Association of NCOSS and since many of the Centres in that Association had volunteer workers an attempt was made to develop a system that could be used by people not formally trained in information skills. For example, the Subject Headings were selected on the basis of community warrant and associated material avoided library terminology.

A classified arrangement, represented by U.W.A.S.I.S., and an alphabetico-specific arrangement, represented by LOCOM, became a topic of controversy with protagonists and antagonists. CISS meetings discussed the issue. The systems were studied in detail and visits made to agencies including libraries, either using or planning to implement, one or the other. From these activities it became apparent that terminological misunderstandings were common and a Background Paper (7) was written in an attempt to explain the basic functions and terminologies involved.

CISS attempted to advise various agencies on the merits and drawbacks of the two systems according to their appropriateness for particular purposes, for example, for organizing planning data or for organizing a card file listing services. It slowly became evident, however, that much of the controversy lay not in the appropriateness of a system for a particular purpose, but rather, in the merits of those purposes.

Thus, gradually, the emphasis moved away from consultancy advice on particular techniques or activities to discussions about the objectives of various information agencies, including the issues that had to be addressed and the processes involved in trying to meet those objectives. At this stage more contacts developed with planners of services and contacts with people at the service point decreased.

The shift from a consultancy role to an inter-active method is evident in the method by which two papers were produced in this latter phase. One, entitled So you're in the information game? (27) arose from a student social worker's attempt to document her experience in trying to set up an information system, using U.W.A.S.I.S., for the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development (I.S.R.C.S.D.). After many months a final consensus paper was produced. There was no author since it was not a case of anyone advising anyone else, as in the case of the CISS Background Paper on Information Systems, rather it was formed out of a pooling of beliefs, ideas and experiences. The initial draft attempted to include the steps to be undertaken in implementing U.W.A.S.I.S. The gist of the final paper was first decide your objectives and then contact other people in the information game for assistance in selecting and implementing an appropriate system.

The second paper, entitled Regional Information Systems (25) developed in a similar manner. All the participants had to learn, and had to make compromises, and again the concept of authorship was not appropriate. The paper arose from an attempt to outline the functions of a regional information system, partly with a view to possible government planning and funding in that area. Finally, however, it was felt that the issues that had had to be addressed and resolved before any consensus could be reached by the Working Party mirrored broadly the issues that would face any group of information agencies planning to be part of an information sharing network. Thus, the final paper rather than presenting an outline or model was produced " ... to start people thinking and talking about the issues and principles that have to be thought through before the 'how-to-do-it' stage." (25:1)

The inter-active method used in the latter part of the Study was concerned with "thinking and talking about the issues and principles that have to be thought through before" the potential role of the public library in community information service can be delineated.

CISS meetings, where information about community information services and activities was shared, continued to be a valuable source of information throughout the study. This was supplemented by visits to a number of libraries, some made in conjunction with the Information Services Consultant of the Public Libraries Division.

2. Gleanings from the inter-active process and observation

i The nature of community information

Through the pursuit of the inter-active process the diversity of activities embraced within the phrase "community information" became evident. The realization that to the non-library sector information is a tool to be used to achieve certain purposes was further re-inforced.

The theoretical bases on which the various agencies operated were rarely spelt out. However, certain theoretical implications could be deduced from the types of activities undertaken. Broadly, all the activities were concerned with information for the well-being of an individual as a member of a community. What sort of information was involved, and the methods adopted to facilitate its utilization, depended largely on the extent to which the individual was seen as a passive recipient of community largesse and restraints, or, as having an active role in deciding the nature of that community.

At one end of the spectrum the individual can be seen as a member of a complex society characterized by rapid social change and a diverse and proliferating range of government and non-government services, programmes and activities. The individual by himself cannot possibly be familiar with all the resources available, and thus a community information service is needed as a linking agent to provide the individual with information about community resources. Typically such a service will maintain a file on community resources: some library-based community information services are examples of this kind.

The well-being of the individual as a member of a community can also be seen as requiring the identification of gaps in service provision; the development of an awareness of problems in the community and the organization, by groups in the community, of programmes to meet community needs. The type of information required, as well as including information about existing resources will also include, for example, planning data, information on how to activate community groups and so on. Practical assistance, for example, transport is often part of such services: some Community Aid and Information Centres and some Neighbourhood Centres are examples. They are involved both with information about services and with providing, or fostering the provision of, services, that is Community Work.

Another step along the spectrum sees individual well-being as requiring a more active stance in affecting the nature of the

community: community action. Here the concern is less with specific problems and needs and more with identifying and acting upon common concerns and interests. This involves acting as an intermediary; linking people together; and resourcing. Resourcing embraces providing not only information, but also practical assistance and skills, for example, printing facilities; how to lobby skills. Some resident action groups are examples of such agencies.

Another view sees the individual himself as involved in identifying and resolving issues that affect or are of concern to the community: community development. The emphasis here is on the process of involving people in identifying issues; the process of resourcing people and enabling them to take action to resolve issues. Information is seen as a vital tool in those processes: however, the process is what is of concern and if inaccurate, even false, information facilitates the process it will be used. Some Regional Councils for Social Development and some Regional Information and Resource Centres are examples of such agencies and obviously given their objectives there is no limit to the type of information that may be relevant.

The concept of information as a means to an end, led to basic misunderstandings between library and non-library agencies. On the one hand the librarians' neutrality and impartiality were seen to indicate a lack of appreciation of the value of information: disinterest could seem like lack of interest. On the other hand librarians saw the emphasis on information as a tool, and especially the willingness to accept incomplete and even inaccurate information, as in turn indicating a lack of appreciation of the value of information.

Many discussions took place, often at cross-purposes, around this misunderstanding. In the process it became necessary to discuss the objectives of various services, library and non-library, and the wider implications that these had. It became apparent that these objectives and implications were rarely spelt out and often not thought out.

The schema outlined above is based on many discussions, in particular, those held during the preparation of So you're in the information game? It presents a far more systematic and self-aware picture than is encountered in reality.

ii The Co-operative Process

As well as lack of awareness of a basic library objective of providing unbiased, accurate information it also became apparent that there was a lack of awareness of the skills of librarians. For example, establishing and maintaining information files was rarely seen as a standard library activity and thus not seen as an area where librarians would be skilled.

The emergence of the LOCOM / U.W.A.S.I.S. controversy gave CISS librarians the opportunity to offer their skills in this area. Many hours were spent discussing, as simply as possible, both the principles and the practicalities of both systems. References to sophisticated library systems and techniques, whether in the area of information storage and retrieval or of information use and dissemination, were avoided in an attempt to neither embarass nor offend. The acknowledgement that librarians had some useful skills in indexing and filing was considered a major gain.

Requests for such assistance increased until they could no longer be met. At first lack of time and resources was a major factor. Later it came to be felt that such assistance might be misguided. It re-inforced the attitude that once a card file, or pamphlet file, was organized its maintenance and up-dating were simple matters. It further re-inforced the concept of librarians as good filing and indexing clerks unconcerned with the value of the information they were handling.

A phrase used in the community information world is the "information game" with its various players taking, keeping, passing, sometimes losing, and sometimes hiding, information. In an attempt to co-operate in the information game certain skills were offered. The skills were accepted but a place in the game was not offered in return.

In retrospect this is hardly surprising since a place in the game was never negotiated. CISS offered some skills and in return it was seeking recognition not of those particular skills, but of the role of librarians in information collection, organization and dissemination. However, this was not thought out clearly and thus not spelt out to the other players.

A "co-operative process" is defined in the Regional Information System paper as "a process involving an agreement among a number of vested interests to share and work together in pursuit of common goals". (25:3)

At the time that co-operation was attempted there was insufficient clarity of individual objectives for any vested interests or mutual goals to be determined. This is one reason the mistake was made of confusing giving with co-operating.

The process of clarifying what was wanted and what was offered, and what was being sought and offered in return, was not worked through. Thus, bargains, trade-offs and compromises could not even begin to be considered.

iii Informal Information Networks

That informal information networks are a means by which many

people obtain and transfer information is generally accepted. Factors such as familiarity, accessibility and personal trust have been suggested as possible reasons for this preference. Through the interactive process it became apparent that formal and informal methods of communication were not seen merely as different ways to achieve the same end: the dissemination of information. Instead a major difference was emphasized between informal information networks and formal information services: an individual could be a participator in a network, but would be a recipient of a service.

To that segment of the non-library sector concerned with information for action and information for change, informal personal networks were seen not only as conveying information but also as conveying the personal skills that support and enable such action. Further personal information networks were seen as involving a set of relationships that allowed people to have ownership and control over skills and resources, including information.

Formal information services were sometimes not only seen as irrelevant, but even as inimical, to social action and social change. In formal information services ownership and control of the information was seen to lie with the providers of the service. Even though "good" providers might "give" information "freely" this placed the recipient in a passive role of receiving a service.

The emphasis on information as a tool to achieve an end, namely action, led to an emphasis on the dangers of information over-load. There was a belief that the individual confronted with a mass of information could feel intimidated and inadequate. There was also a belief that information over-load was sometimes consciously engineered in order to impede action. Thus, one of the characteristics sometimes regarded as a potential advantage of formal information services, the comprehensiveness of resources, was seen as a disadvantage.

The concept that improving the number and quality of information services would facilitate the distribution of information, in particular to the information poor, was quite alien to such thinkers.

iv The Information Component

To many service agencies, such as Community Health Centres, drop-in-centres, counselling services and so on, information about other services was a component of their own direct services. This was also the case with many of the agencies who formed the Local Community Services Association of NCOSS.

The creation and maintenance of information files adequate

to serve this component was often recognized as a problem. The LOCOM system of NCOSS was developed partly in recognition of that problem. The requests for assistance from CISS, and from individual librarians, further indicated some recognition that special skills were needed. It became apparent, however, that it was widely assumed that such skills could be acquired given the willingness of information workers to impart them, for example, by way of consultancies, workshops, training manuals etc. This assumption was shared by many of the non-library information agencies.

The view that creating and maintaining information files was a task requiring a trained information worker for its efficient execution was not commonly held. When expressed by librarians it was met sometimes with surprise, sometimes with rejection and sometimes with the accusation that such a view hid a jealous guarding of professional mystique.

In this context it must be remembered that many such agencies operated with some professionally trained staff and some volunteer workers. It was widely assumed that some professional welfare skills, for example, interviewing and counselling skills could be imparted to volunteers by appropriate training provided by the professional workers. In some cases this was motivated by practical necessities such as staff shortages; in other cases, it was a conscious attempt to de-professionalise human services. Since information skills were seen as a component of these direct service skills it was perhaps understandable that it was also assumed that they could be imparted. The lesser importance given to these skills, however, was indicated in the nature of training considered appropriate. The assumption was that the professional workers involved, often social work trained, could learn such skills from information workers and then, in turn, impart them to workers, both professional and volunteer. NCOSS, for example, used the assistance of the two librarians who developed LOCOM to help non-information trained NCOSS staff to run workshops etc., on its use. The problems encountered by the non-library sector in using LOCOM suggest that the task may not be as simple as was perhaps imagined.

The So you're in the information game? handbook is another example of the same approach. Directed at information agencies, rather than service agencies, it attempted to impart information skills in terms of setting objectives and considering the nature of the information system appropriate to those objectives. Originally intended as a handbook for groups it was found to be unsuitable when there was no previous back-ground in information systems. Many groups appeared to want a consultancy function to fill in such a background and to help them clarify objectives. Thus, the handbook was revised to become a consultant's manual. The assumption, again, was that the consultant or intermediary would be trained in working with community groups and could acquire information skills without specific training.

Whilst not denying that some information skills can be learnt "on-the-job", the view that the information component can be

adequately managed by non-information trained workers perhaps indicates a lack of awareness of the range and complexity of the tasks involved. Further, since the workers in those agencies see information as an adjunct to their direct service task the motivation to acquire and apply information skills cannot always be guaranteed.

v Libraries

Information gathered at CISS meetings, and from visits to libraries, corroborated the questionnaire findings in suggesting that providing a systematic community information service was a minority activity in public libraries.

It also became apparent that the objectives of community information services were rarely clearly defined: in particular in relation to other information agencies in the community. The lack of personal contact with such agencies and the lack of understanding of their objectives were hardly surprising in view of the general lack of contact among community information agencies in general.

Information obtained through meetings and visits also corroborated the questionnaire findings in suggesting that among libraries offering a systematic community information service there was an awareness of the problems involved in information collecting and up-dating. Such libraries were unanimous in stressing the need for frequent personal contacts with both information and service agencies, and the complexity and magnitude of the task was evidenced by the efforts expended. It was also evidenced by the failure, of some libraries, to develop up-to-date and systematic services through failing to appreciate the resources and efforts required. An up-to-date knowledge of the information and service environment emerged as a pervasive factor in enabling the nature of the appropriate service, and the resources required, to be identified.

Setting objectives and allocating resources is a management function. The little evidence found of systematic planning in those areas suggests that the comments made in a study of the quality of public library reference services in Victoria apply to community information service management in New South Wales:

> ... there is a need to improve the administrative skills of the professional staff in public libraries. ... There is a great need for continuing education in the field of library management. (23:114)

It is perhaps a reflection of attitudes of library

management that there appeared to be little activity in investigating the nature of the information demands, and needs in the community. For example, identifying issues about which the community might want information, compiling community profiles etc., were infrequent activities.

More frequent were those which took as their staring point the recording and documenting of what existed in the community in the way of services, activities and programmes: card files and directories were often the visible end-product of such activities. That the effectiveness of those files and directories in meeting information demands and needs was rarely evaluated is hardy surprising given the lack of systematically collected data not only about the nature of such demands and needs, but further, of the processes whereby people seek to satisfy them.

However, the effectiveness of files and directories as means for recording, organizing and retrieving information was a matter of concern: especially the problem of up-dating. Again, the magnitude of the task and the resources required was emphasized by those librarians who had had experience in such activities. The concern for practical guidelines for file organization and maintenance can be partly guaged by the rapid acceptance of the LOCOM system which was implemented by several libraries during the time that the Study was in progress. It appeared to be both suitable and acceptable.

CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSION

The main conclusion of the questionnaire survey can only be that the original subjective estimate that library-based community information services are in an uneven state of development has been validated, in so far as the questionnaire revealed valid data, on a more widespread and objective basis. It had been planned that an analyses of the impact of particular methods of co-operation, file organization and maintenance, publicity and monitoring were to be a major basis on which to build appropriate guidelines. However, the questionnaire findings showed that the level of involvement of public libraries in community information services was insufficient for any factual overview to provide the information upon which to develop guidelines around "successful" services. Thus the guidelines, the subject of another report, have been developed on the basis of the implications of the questionnaire findings fleshed out with information obtained through the inter-active process and observation.

The range of activities concerned with information for the individual's well-being as a member of a community was amply revealed through the inter-active process. Those activities in which information is a tool used to achieve action and change could be considered, theoretically, as outside the range of the role of the library. However, regardless of theoretical considerations the current activities and attitudes indicated by the questionnaire findings, and the current limitations of resources observed, suggest that public library participation in community information may well be, at least initially, restricted to providing information about community services, programmes and activities.

Further, the apparent tendency by the public and other agencies to view the library as a source of information about sport, cultural, recreational, educational and government matters suggest that a possible role for the public library might be to become the specialist agency in those areas.

The range of activities involved in community information, and the limitations of library resources, make it apparent that the public library role has to be one of participation. The outline of a possible network of referrals and co-operative activities among libraries and Community Aid and Information Centres can be faintly discerned. The appreciation of library skills in file creation and maintenance, indicated by both the questionnaire findings and the other methods used in the study, suggests that it could be a potentially fruitful offering with which to initiate co-operative activities.

However, whether these are the only skills in which librarians wish to be considered most expert deserves consideration. It would be unfortunate if the visibility of these technical skills over-shadowed other possible roles, for example, as information advocates, intermediaries and linking agents between people and information.

Appendix A

COVERING LETTER

CISS (Community Information Sharing Service)

October, 1978.

Dear Librarian,

The Library Council of New South Wales has recently funded CISS (the Community Information Sharing Service) to develop guidelines for public library participation in community information.

In the study the term "community information" is used to mean information for everyday living, that is, information about the services, programmes and activities available in the community. The term does not include the provision of those services, programmes or activities. For example, providing emergency housing is a welfare service whereas providing information about who provides emergency housing is a community information service.

I have been engaged as a consultant for the duration of the project and my first task is to gather information about some of the services being offered by public libraries.

I would be grateful if you would help me by completing the attached questionnaires. In particular I would appreciate it if you would distribute it to those branches and bookmobiles that you consider appropriate. Since there are severe time constraints I would be grateful if you would request your branches and bookmobiles to return the questionnaire directly to me in the pre-addressed envelope.

On the basis of information from the questionnaires and from visits and discussions I intend to arrive at a set of guidelines for public library participation in community information. It is planned to communicate and publicize these by means of workshops, seminars, etc.

Your help in preparing the input to these workshops and other activities is greatly appreciated and I hope that they will in turn be of interest to your library.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Eugenia Lovelace

EUGENIA LOVELACE,
Consultant,
CISS Study.

N.B. For queries and additional copies of the questionnaire please ring Carol Yuen, Public Libraries Division, 240 4396.

Please forward questionnaires to: Public Libraries Division,
CAGA Centre, 8-18 Bent Street,
SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2000

Appendix B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Note: Figures after the decimal point have been rounded to the nearest whole number

N = 191

In this survey the term "community information" is used to mean information for everyday living, that is, information about the services, programmes and activities available in the community. The term does NOT include the provision of those services, programmes or activities. For example, providing emergency housing is a welfare service whereas providing information about who provides emergency housing is a community information service.

1. Within the last year have you been asked for information about the services, programmes and activities available in your local community? (Please tick as appropriate)

☐ YES	☐ NO
93%	7%

If NO please turn to Question 5.

If YES, was this: (Please tick as appropriate)

Within the last day	Within the last week	Within the last month	Within the last year	No answer
☐	☐	☐	☐	
18%	33%	25%	17%	.5%

2. If an individual user has asked you within the last year for any of the types of information listed in the left hand column below would you please recall and indicate how you handled your LATEST query for EACH type of information requested. (Please tick as appropriate).

				LOCATED THE INFORMATION ELSEWHERE THROUGH:							
	Answered the query from my own library resources	Felt the query not appropriate to a public library		A Community aid & information centre	N.S.W. Council of Social Service	A Government Department	N.S.W. Govt. Information & Sales Centre	Another Library	Local Council	Local Groups e.g. Rotary, A.A.	Other (Please Specify) *Details are only given when mentioned by more than 5 respondents
Information about health & welfare services. Within the last: Day ☐13 Week ☐40 Month ☐ 54 Longer ☐ 23 No reply 3 133 (70%)	73	4	Sent the requester to:- 79	31	4	26	0	6	20	6	10
			Got the info. from:-								
Information about legal services. Within the last: Day ☐ 7 Week ☐18 Month ☐ 34 Longer ☐ 31 No reply 1 91 (46%)	39	7	Sent the requester to:- 57	22	1	15	0	5	2	0	20 *Legal Aid
			Got the info. from:-								
nformation about pensions, benefits etc. Within the last: Day ☐3 Week ☐ 9 Month ☐ 35 Longer ☐ 44 No reply 3 94 (49%)	44	6	Sent the requester to:- 57	9	18	30	1	5	2	0	1
			Got the info. from:-								
nformation about government regulations, members of Parliament, elections, local government etc. Within the last: Day ☐13 Week ☐40 Month ☐51 Longer ☐ 34 No reply 3 140 (73%)	102	1	Sent the requester to:- 56	2	1	17	8	11	23	2	67 'd 13 *A member of parliament
			Got the info. from:-								

(Question 2 continued..)

	Answered the query from my own library resources	Felt the query not appropriate to a public library		LOCATED THE INFORMATION ELSEWHERE THROUGH: A Community aid & information centre	N.S.W. Council of Social Service	A Government Department	N.S.W. Govt. Information & Sales Centre	Another Library	Local Council	Local Groups e.g. Rotary A.A.	Other (Please Specify)
Information about local sport, cultural and social activities 155 (81%) Within the last: Day ☐ 15 Week ☐ 59 Month ☐ 45 ☐ Longer 35 No reply 1	117	0	Sent the requester to:- 55 Got the info. from:-	8	0	3	0	4	15	22	13 *Names of indvdl groups
Information about educational courses, facilities, etc. 145 (77%) Within the last: Day ☐ 12 Week ☐ 47 Month ☐ 56 ☐ Longer 28 No reply 2	109	1	Sent the requester to:- 51 Got the info. from:-	2	0	13	1	11	2	7	23 *Names of indivdl edctntl instutns.
Information about employment, etc. 96 (50%) Within the last: Day ☐ 1 Week ☐ 25 Month ☐ 28 ☐ Longer 39 No reply 3	35	5	Sent the requester to:- 67 Got the info. from:-	11	2	40	0	1	12	2	9 *C.E.S.
Other (Please specify) 47 (25%) Within the last: Day ☐ 12 Week ☐ 18 Month ☐ 9 ☐ Longer 7 No reply 1	30	1	Sent the requester to:- 25 Got the info. from:-	5	0	13	0	3	2	2	4 p. 51
Tourist information Local history Lists of Local Orgzts.				/90	/26	/157	/10	/46	/78	/41	/93

3. Have any agencies or organizations asked you for help in answering their own community information queries within the last year? (Please tick as appropriate) 43% ☐ YES 57% ☐ NO

If YES can you recall the LATEST such query from EACH group listed below and tick the following table as appropriate.

TYPE OF AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION	TYPE OF INFORMATION: Information about health and welfare services	Information about legal services	Information pensions, benefits etc.	Information about government regulations members of Parliament, elections, local government etc.	Information about local sport, cultural and social activities	Information about educational courses, facilities, etc.	Information about employment etc.	Other (Please specify)
A community aid and information centre 51 (27%) Within the last: Day ☐ 4 Week ☐ 10 Month ☐ 24 ☐ Longer 12 No reply 1	14	5	2	8	22	14	2	6
N.S.W. Council of Social Service 6 (3%) Within the last: Day ☐ 1 Week ☐ Month ☐ 1 ☐ Longer 3 No reply 1	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
A Government Department Within the last: 22 (12%) Day ☐ 1 Week ☐ Month ☐ ☐ Longer 6 No reply 1	2	0	2	4	8	5	3	2
N.S.W. Government Information and Sales Centre Within the last: 4 (2%) Day ☐ Week ☐ Month ☐ ☐ Longer No reply 1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
Another library 32 (17%) Within the last: Day ☐ Week ☐ Month ☐ 10 ☐ Longer 13 No reply 1	3	2	0	4	10	7	3	9

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(Question 3 continued...)

TYPE OF INFORMATION

TYPE OF AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION	Information about health and welfare services	Information about legal services	Information pensions, benefits etc.	Information about government regulations, members of Parliament, elections, local government etc.	Information about local sport, cultural and social activities	Information about educational courses, facilities, etc.	Information about employment etc.	Other (Please specify)
Local council 54 (28%) Within the last: Day ☐ 5 Week ☐ 12 Month ☐ 22 ☐ Longer 14 No reply 1	4	0	0	25	22	14	1	5
Local groups e.g. Rotary, A.A. 34 (18%) Within the last: Day ☐ 2 Week ☐ 9 Month ☐ 14 ☐ Longer 6 No reply 3	6	2	1	4	17	8	2	5
Other. (Please specify) Within the last: 16 (18%) Day ☐ Week ☐ 7 Month ☐ 3 ☐ Longer 4 Schools No reply 1	1	0	0	0	1	6	2	11
	32	9	5	45	83	54	13	44

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4. Is collecting and up-dating information about the services, programmes and activities available in your local area the special responsibility of a member of the library staff? (Please tick as appropriate)

	☐ YES	☐ NO	No reply	Not Applcbl.
If YES would you please write the official title of that person	32%	58%	4%	7%

5. Are there local directories or local lists of information and service agencies in your area? (Please tick as appropriate)

☐ YES	☐ NO	No reply
84%	14%	2%

If YES -

5.a. Has your library ever assisted in COLLECTING the information? (Please tick as appropriate)

☐ YES	☐ NO	No reply
70	89	1

5.b Has your library ever assisted in ORGANIZING or INDEXING the information? (Please tick as appropriate)

☐ YES	☐ NO	No reply
47	106	7

5.c If yes to 5a or 5b please give the name and date of publication of the directory (ies) or list(s)

47 libraries named a directory or list. Of these 28 had helped in both collecting and indexing; 18 had helped in collecting only; and 1 library had helped in indexing only.

6. Is your library involved in any publicity activities with other information agencies in your area, e.g. displaying each others leaflets or posters, producing joint leaflets etc? (Please tick as appropriate)

☐ YES	☐ NO	No reply
74%	24%	2%

If YES would you please describe such activities - 139 libraries described their activities.

105 indicated that they displayed, within the library, posters, leaflets etc., advertising the services of other agencies.

19 indicated that they displayed, in other agencies, posters, leaflets etc; advertising library services

8 indicated other more active, albeit solo, types of publicity, for example, items in local newspaper

7 indicated jointly produced publicity activities.

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7. If you have used any of the following methods for collecting and up-dating information about community services, programmes and activities would you please tick the appropriate box for the most recent occasion on which you used the method. (If you have not used any of these methods within the last year please turn to Question 8)

METHOD	Within last: DAY	WEEK	MONTH	YEAR
Informal person to person contact e.g. 'phone calls, conversation, visiting	11%	14%	18%	14%
Scanning local newspapers, noticeboards, keeping an eye out for leaflets	15%	20%	10%	5%
Placing your library on mailing lists to receive information	2%	11%	15%	12%
Going to inter-agency meetings, for example, with health, welfare, education agencies	2%	6%	15%	11%
Going to meetings of local groups e.g. Rotary, A.A.	2%	6%	11%	8%
Going to talks, workshops, seminars	1%	4%	9%	15%
Other (Please specify)	1%	1%	2%	2%

8. Do you have a collection, other than Directories, of information about community services, programmes and activities? (Please tick as appropriate)

☐ YES	☐ NO	No reply
41%	59%	.5%

If NO please turn to Question 12.

If YES is this (Please tick as many boxes as appropriate)	Kept in folders (for example in a pamphlet file) YES ☐ 60 NO ☐ 18	Maintained in a card file YES ☐ 40 NO ☐ 37 No reply 1
Used by library staff	YES ☐ 56 NO ☐ 4	YES ☐ 38 NO ☐ 0 No Reply 2
Used by library users	YES ☐ 46 NO ☐ 13 No Reply 1	YES ☐ 21 NO ☐ 17 2
Shared at all with any other information agencies	YES ☐ 18 NO ☐ 37 5	YES ☐ 24 NO ☐ 15 1

If YES please name these other agencies

28 libraries responded: 6 shared pamphlet files only; 13 shared card files only; 9 shared both. 43 agencies were named. A C.A.I.C.* was mentioned 27 times. All other agencies were mentioned by fewer than 5 respondents.

Other types of systems - please describe

20 libraries responded. A notice-board and leaflets were mentioned 14 times. All other systems were mentioned by fewer than 5 respondents.

*C.A.I.C is used to cover agencies variously known as Community Aid and Information Centre, Community Information Centre, Neighbourhood Centre, etc.

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9. Is your collection of information about community services, programmes and activities:
(Please tick as many boxes as appropriate)

Kept in folders (for example in a pamphlet file)	☐ YES 57	☐ NO 18	No Reply 3
Filed under agency name e.g. Smith Family	☐ YES 24	☐ NO 32	1
Filed under type of service e.g. accommodation	☐ YES 35	☐ NO 21	1
Filed under type of enquirer e.g. single parent	☐ YES 8	☐ NO 48	1

Other headings used - please describe 10 libraries responded.
Specific headings eg. hobbies, parks were mentioned 7 times.

Maintained on a card file	☐ YES 40	☐ NO 37	No reply 1
Main entry under name of agency e.g. Smith Family	☐ YES 31	☐ NO 9	
Main entry under type of service e.g. accommodation	☐ YES 21	☐ NO 18	1
Main entry under type of enquirer e.g. single parent	☐ YES 9	☐ NO 30	1

Are there cross-references to the main entry from :
Agency name ☐ YES 18 ☐ NO
Service ☐ YES 29 ☐ NO
Enquirer ☐ YES 14 ☐ NO

Other - please describe .....
4 libraries responded

Other types of systems - please describe 10 libraries responded.

A notice-board was mentioned 5 times. All other systems were mentioned by fewer than 5 respondents.

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10. How are the headings for your filing system selected? 49 libraries responded.

"Common usage" was mentioned by 26 libraries. A standardized system was mentioned by 16 libraries: of these, 8 mentioned a library system; 7 mentioned LOCOM or one of its earlier variants; and 1 mentioned another system. The "recognized name of the organization" was the method named by 7 libraries.

11. What have you found to be the most satisfactory method for maintaining your files e.g. adding new information, up-dating, deleting? What have you found to be the major problems in this area? 41 libraries responded

Methods		Problems	
Personal contact	- 12	Lack of time	- 16
Checking newspapers	7	Constantly changing information	9
All other methods were mentioned by fewer than 5 respondents		Lack of staff	8
		Lack of co-operation from agencies from whom information is sought	7

12. Have any other agencies, including libraries sought your assistance in collecting or organizing their information?

29% ☐ YES 57% ☐ NO No Reply 14%

If YES please name the agencies and explain the nature of the assistance sought 42 libraries responded

65 agencies were named. A CAIC was mentioned 28 times: 13 times in relation to help in organizing files; 6 times in relation to seeking copies of files; all other types of activities were mentioned by fewer than 5 respondents. A library was mentioned 10 times. All other agencies were mentioned by fewer than 5 respondents.

13. Have you used the assistance of other agencies, including other libraries, in collecting or organizing your information?

24% ☐ YES 62% ☐ NO No Reply 14%

If YES please name the agencies and explain the nature of the assistance sought 32 libraries responded.

40 agencies were named. A CAIC was mentioned 13 times: 10 times in relation to seeking information about local groups a: (activities; all other types of activities were mentioned by fewer than 5 respondents. All other agencies were mentioned by fewer than 5 respondents.

14a. What have you found to be the most effective methods of publicizing the information services offered by your library?

126 libraries (66%) responded. 7 indicated no publicity activities.
119 libraries indicated 208 activities:

57 - displays, posters etc., within the library
44 - personal word of mouth with users within the library
38 - newspaper advertisements and articles
13 - radio (4 metropolitan - 9 country)
11 - displays, posters etc. in shopping areas, agencies
9 - newsletters, leaflets
9 - visits, talks etc. to groups and organizations
7 - notices with Council rates, electricity bills etc.
6 - T.V. (all country libraries)
6 - improved services

All other activities were mentioned by fewer than 5 respondents.

14b. Assuming that you had additional resources what type of publicity would you like to be able to undertake? 100 libraries (52%) responded. 3 indicated no need to publicize. 97 libraries indicated 169 activities:

31 - newspaper advertisements and articles
29 - improved services: 13 up-to-date information; 8 more/better staff; 8 improved services in general
18 - radio
15 - T.V.
11 - Newsletters, circulars
11 - Media
11 - displays, posters
10 - professionally produced signs, posters, notices etc.
8 - more visits to groups; 5 - letterbox drops

All other activities were mentioned by fewer than 5 respondent

15. Is a record kept of the number and nature of enquiries received for information about community activities and services?
(Please tick as appropriate)

☐ YES	☐ NO	No Reply	Not Applicable
13%	76%	4%	7%

16. Could you please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:
(Please tick as appropriate)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
A librarian should always attempt to provide printed sources of information.	23%	45%	5%	23%	.5%	5%
After referring a person to a welfare service a librarian should follow up to ensure that the service provided really did meet the person's needs.	4%	23%	16%	47%	6%	5%
As much as possible one should answer all queries that come into the library from the library's own resources.	12%	57%	4%	18%	3%	6%
A librarian should be sufficiently familiar with the welfare services available to be able to direct people to the best service for their needs.	31%	53%	8%	4%	.5%	4%
In order to direct a user to appropriate sources of information a librarian should first find out why the user wants the information.	4%	33%	18%	29%	12%	5%
A librarian should always attempt to direct people to a relevant welfare service as well as providing information on the topic.	17%	56%	8%	15%	1%	4%

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply
After referring a user to another library a librarian should follow-up to ensure that the information provided really did meet the user's needs.	5%	20%	15%	48%	6%	6%
A librarian is invading the user's personal privacy once he/she starts to ask the user their reason for wanting information.	14%	38%	16%	25%	2%	5%

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Name of library (or Branch where applicable):_____

_____

_____

Name(s) of person(s) answering the questionnaire (optional):_____

_____

_____

_____

The identity of the Library and the person(s) answering the questionnaire are completely confidential, however, it would assist greatly for follow-up contacts if the person(s) could be identified.

Thank you,

Eugenia Lovelace

Eugenia Lovelace,
Consultant,
CISS Study.

Appendix C

CHI-SQUARE TESTS

Chi-square tests

Statistical data was added for central library services regarding expenditure per capita and size of population served coded according to broad categories supplied by the Public Libraries Division as follows:

Expenditure per capita		Size of population served	
Metropolitan	Country	Metropolitan	Country
$5.00+	$4.00+	150.000+	50.000+
$4.00+	$3.00+	100.000+	25.000+
$3.00+	$2.00+	50.000+	10.000+
$3.00-	$2.00-	50.000-	10.000-

Chi-square tests of significance were run as follows:

Frequency of receiving a request for information Being asked for help by other agencies in answering queries Having a member of staff with special responsibility for community information Having a card file Keeping a record of queries Engaging in joint publicity activities	BY	Metropolitan Central Service Metropolitan Branch Service Country Central Service Country Branch Service Size of Population Served Per Capita expenditure
Keeping a record of queries received	BY	Staff with special responsibility
Having a card file	BY	Nature of enquiries received
Having a card file	BY	Methods of up-dating

In order to obtain a sufficient number of libraries in the various categories for the cell sizes to be adequate for chi-square analyses some of the data was subsequently clustered as follows.

Libraries that had received a query within the last day or week were compared to those that had received a query within the last month or longer according to:

1. Metropolitan or country location
2. Central or branch service
3. Size of population served in two broad categories large/small
4. Per capita expenditure in two broad categories high/low

Only one result proved significant at the .01 level, Central library services were more likely than branch services to have received a query within the last day or week, than within the last month or year.

	Central	Branch
Day or Week	60	35
Month or Year	29	51
Significance		.01

Libraries that had been asked for help in answering queries were similarly analyzed. Only two results were significant: more central services had been asked for such assistance than had branches and fewer libraries serving larger populations tended not to receive such requests.

	Central	Branch		Large	Small
No request	35	70	No request	7	29
A request	57	25	A request	26	30
Significance	.01		Significance	.01	

Whether libraries had a member of staff with special responsibility for community information was similarly analyzed. The only significant results were that this was more likely to occur at metropolitan rather than country services.

	Metropolitan	Country
No special staff	49	60
Staff	40	21
	significance	.01

Only 40 libraries had a card file and their location in 20 metropolitan central services and 9 metropolitan branches; 9 country central services and 2 country branches made further analyses in terms of location etc., irrelevant.

Similarly 25 libraries kept a record of queries received as follows: 12 metropolitan central services, and 12 metropolitan branches; 1 country central service and no country branches.

Chi-squares run on joint publicity activities and location, size and expenditure factors; a card file and nature of queries received; a card file and methods of up-dating proved either not significant or the cell sizes made the results suspect.

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